

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

LOT'S CHOICE.*

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, B.D.,
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Abram was very rich, v. 2. Riches are a fine incident in a life. They are bad when they compass the whole career, Gold mounting on the harness of a handsome and speedy horse is fit and beautiful. But to put such harness on a wind-broken, spavined wreck of a horse, which is unfit for work or travel is to make him ridiculous. Get wisdom and fear of God; and, if riches come too, welcome them. But by no means make riches the chief end of life.

Lot also . . . had flocks, and herds, and tents, v. 5. Abram owned his wealth; but Lot's wealth owned him. Abram was the master of his cattle, his silver and his gold; Lot was the beast of burden of his. Abram had the dignity and power of a king. Lot had the bearing and authority of a slave, who was noticed and respected, not for what he was in himself, but for what his master, Mammon, let him be. Do not let your personality be drowned, even in a sea of gold.

The Cannanite and Perizzite dwelled then in the land, v. 7. These are the "them that are without" of Col. 4:5. And the conduct of the people of God is helped by remembering the value of their watchful, unsympathetic criticism. They know how unseemly it is for Christian brethren to quarrel. They know that it is less reprehensible for themselves to quarrel. Let us "take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

No strife, v. 8. All quarrels will tend to disappear if they are left alone. There is a legend, that Hercules was once going along a narrow road, when a strange-looking animal appeared threateningly before him. Hercules struck it with his club, and was greatly surprised to see the same animal appear yet more threateningly, and three times as large as before. Hercules struck it fast and furiously, but the oftener he struck, the bigger the monster grew, till it completely blocked the road. Then Pallas appeared to him, and warned him to stop. "The monster's name is strife," she said. "Let it alone, and it will soon become as small as it was at first."

No strife, between brethren, v. 8. This is the great reason for peace. It is love that forbids us quarreling. In an ancient battle, two warriors on opposite sides of the fray were hacking away at each other, when the helmet of one of them fell off. The face of a young man was disclosed, which his assailant recognized as that of his own brother. The fight stopped then and there. Neither had any wish to kill his own brother. Jesus would teach all of us that we are brothers, and have the best of reasons for agreeing with each other.

Lot chose, v. 11. He stood forth and said, "No, Uncle, all that I have I owe to you. You are the elder and I am the younger. You take your choice, and I will abide by it." Was that what Lot said? What a pity it was not. But Lot had grown so greedy that he forgot what was courteous and just, and he said to himself, "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. This is the most fortunate quarrel that ever came my way." And so Lot lost his chance of being known as a generous and humble man.

*S.S. Lesson February 17, 1907. Genesis 13:1-13. Commit to memory vs. 8, 9. Read Genesis, Chs. 13, 14, 19. Golden text—Take heed, and beware of covetousness.—Luke 12:15.

Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, v. 12. Always is the tent pitched toward the place it afterward enters. When we see boys and girls so full of levity that they cannot spare a thought for duty, we say, "There is a tent pitched toward unhappiness." And likewise is disobedience on the road to profligacy; and indolence on the road to uselessness, and forwardness on the road to disgrace; and indecision on the road to eternal loss and death.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

Rev. James Ross, D. D., London.

Garden—The surface of the Dead Sea is nearly 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and the rich alluvial plain above it is very fertile, where there is irrigation and no alkali. The streams from the hills, which were once used to water it, have now shrunk, owing to the destruction of the trees; but wherever they are used, the heat, moisture and rich soil produce astonishing results. Three crops of different cereals or vegetables in one year are possible, and indeed not uncommon.

Zoar—There has been much disputing among geographers as to whether the Cities of the Plain stood at the north end or the south end of the Dead Sea. It is remarkable that Zoar was a well known place in the time of Josephus, and even down to the Middle Ages; but all traces of it have now disappeared. However, there is little doubt, from the allusions of the later historians, and from the reference here, that it was at the southeast corner of the sea, and it is to be looked for in what the Arabs call the Glen of the Smooth Cliffs, where travellers have thus far found only a village of reed huts, surrounded by camps of the Bedouins.

ONE-TENTH.

One-tenth of ripened grain.
One-tenth of tree and vine.
One-tenth of all the yield
From ten-tenths rain and shine.
One-tenth of lowing herds
That browse on hill and plain;
One-tenth of bleating flocks,
For ten-tenths shine and rain.
One-tenth of all increase
From counting room and mart;
One-tenth that science yields.
One-tenth of every part.
One-tenth of loom and press,
One-tenth of mill and mine;
One-tenth of every craft
Wrought out by gifts of Thine.
One-tenth of glowing words
That glowing guineas hold;
One-tenth of written thoughts
That turn to shining gold.
One-tenth and dost Thou, Lord,
But ask this meagre loan,
When all the earth is Thine,
And all we have Thine own!

BIBLE BEES.

The "Bees of the Bible," are very numerous. They never sting; they yield a great deal of honey; their honey never cloy; and it is their nature to be found together in swarms. Here is a specimen of them:

"Be ye kindly affectioned one to another."
"Be sober, and watch unto prayer."
"Be content with such things as ye have."
"Be strong in the Lord."
"Be courteous."
"Be not wise in your own conceits."
"Be not unkindful to entertain strangers."
"Be not children in understanding."
"Be followers of God as dear children."

"FOUND OUT."

Rev. Austin L. Budge, M.A., Hanover.

"Go call thy husband," is a command that would offend most people. It would be characterized as impertinent. Very much milder questions are resented to-day. "Where were you last night?" "How did you spend your holiday abroad?" "What book did you hide?" would be an examination too personal for our choice.

There are colors which deceive the eye in gas light. What seems yellow might be another shade, so a word which appears in the dim light of our perversity an insult, will very likely in the clear light of truth be seen as a great kindness.

"Come and see a man that told me all things that ever I did." No wonder that she was startled, who would like anybody to know all the things that we ever did? A good many people could tell of quite a few sins in our lives, for even "murder will out." It was not confession, for "He told me." There were things she could not and would not tell to any person. Because He knew all, He must be the Christ.

Her response was the correct attitude. "Come, see Him," she decided instead of making the fatal run away into darkness. To hide ourselves and yet know that there is one who knows everything that we have ever done, is "the beginning of sorrow." What a companion to have the old Adam in some far off refuge! How much better to know that it is the Christ who has discovered us! To come to Him "who was wounded for our transgressions," is to find out that He will remember them no more forever.

The story of the sinner saved by grace may therefore be given in a sentence—"found out, but forgotten." Let the world turn over new pages, which will record the deeds of a holy life. The past should be sealed. "What you were and what you did," were once found out, but are now covered forever. Rather let us be ever saying—This is the Christ, Come! Come!

LOOKING AFAR.

"What hast thou in the house?" asked the prophet, when the woman came to him for help to meet her hopeless debt. The house held nothing but a pot of oil, yet that, when she began to use it, heaven-blessed and heaven-directed, was enough to meet all the need, and point the way to future comfort. "What is that in thine hand?" asked the Lord of the man who shrank back from leadership because he had nothing to endow him for such an office. That which he held was only a rod out in the wilderness for the guiding of his sheep, but it became the symbol of power—a token before which kings trembled, a scepter which nature itself obeyed. "What have ye?" demanded the Master, when his disciples besought him to send the famished multitude elsewhere.

Humanity is still very much what it was in the olden days, and the Lord who rules the world is "the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and forever." Those in sore need and trouble are still prone to look afar for aid and deliverance, and to pray for some wonderful intervention from the skies; but now, as of old, the help that Providence sends lies usually in a new use of, a fresh blessing upon, that which the house or the hand already holds. Many a soul, praying sadly day after day for light, for strength, for aid, would find its prayer already answered if it began to use what it has.—Forward.